PREPARE THE BALLOT

Once the city council candidates and the ballot questions have been identified, draft the sample ballot. Ballots can be prepared on the computer and xeroxed. Check your local ordinance for specific instructions on the type and color paper to use (most cities require white paper for official ballots and colored paper for sample ballots), the font size of the print, and specific instructions on the format.

If your local ordinance doesn't address how to prepare the ballot, use these tips. Prepare a heading for the ballot that contains the name of the city, the type of election (regular or special), the type of ballot (official or sample), the date of the election, and a space in the upper right corner for numbering the ballots.

Gather material used to prepare the ballots, including nominating petitions or declarations of candidacy, and any ordinances or resolutions adopted by the city council relating to issues that have been placed on the ballot.

The ballots are organized by section, with general instructions noting that the ballot shall be marked with a an "✖" mark, check mark "✓", or plus sign "✚", that only the indicated number of candidates shall be voted for, and that write-in votes must be written in the space provided. Other instructions to the voters may also be included.

Each seat designated is then named (for example, Seat A or Seat #1) and information is given on the number of candidates to be voted on (for example, "Vote for No More Than One"). Each candidate's name is listed, with a box on the left to mark the candidate's name (generally the box is 1/4" by l/4" square), and a space is left at the end of the section for write-in candidates. The number of write-in spaces is the same as the number of seats to be filled. For example, if two seats are open, the ballot will have two write-in spaces.

After listing all the seats and the candidates who have filed for those seats, add any issues and space for marking "Yes" or "No" or "For" or "Against" for each issue.

For example: ____Yes   ____No

Rotation of candidates' names
Candidates' names may be rotated on the official ballots if the local ordinance requires it. If your ordinance calls for rotating names, the candidate's name appearing on the top line is dropped to the bottom of the section with each candidate's name having, as nearly as possible, an equal opportunity to appear at the top of the section.   AS 15.15.030(6) says that, for State election ballots, the order of placement of names on the ballot shall be randomly determined.

After the official ballots are prepared, keep them in a safe place and note the total number delivered to each election board chair and absentee voting official. This does not mean that the ballot number delivered to every voter must be recorded.

Ballot printing
The number of ballots to order is based on the number of voters registered in the city and the turnout expected. Keep in mind that there should be enough ballots for every voter who goes to the polls and who votes by absentee ballot. Some clerks order enough ballots for every registered voter, while others order fewer than that.

Ballot numbering
Each ballot should be numbered in the upper right corner. The ballots may be numbered by hand or with a numbering machine. The number corner should be scored for easy removal.

Proofread
Proofread the draft copy of the ballot very carefully before it is copied. Because the ballot should be perfect, ask some other person to proof the ballots also. *Ballots can never be over-proofed!*

Sample ballots
The heading of the ballot should indicate if it is an official ballot or a sample ballot. Except for that, the two ballots are the same. In general, sample ballots are printed on colored paper. Sample ballots should always be available because they can be used if there are not enough official ballots or if the official ballots are lost. If sample ballots are used, the election judge must fill out an affidavit of how many are used.

Distribute ballots
After the ballots have been copied, review them to make sure they are right. Prepare a ballot statement for each precinct indicating the total number of ballots given to each election board chair and the numbers of those ballots (see BALLOT RECEIPT). In addition, keep track of the ballots retained for absentee voting. At the end of each day, check to see if the number of absentee voters matches the number of ballots used.